Enforcement of ECA

459. SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the results of the enforcement of the Essential Commodities Act in 2006 with respect to the number of raids conducted, persons arrested, prosecuted and convicted; and

(b) the details of value of goods confiscated thereby?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) and (b) The enforcement of the essential Commodities Act, 1955 lies with the State Government/UT Administrations. The enforcement of Essential Commodities Act, 1955 for the year 2006 as reported by the States/UTs upto 30.6.2006 with respect to the numbers of raids conducted, persons arrested, prosecuted, convicted and the value of goods confiscated are given below:

No. of Raids	No. of Persons Arrested	No. of Persons Prosecuted	No. of Persons Convicted	Value of goods Confiscated (In Rs. Lakhs)
30920	1617	1097	35	679.1

Import of sugar

460. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's notification dated 23rd June, 2006 allowing import of white sugar at zero duty for a period of three months, upto 30th September, 2006 has brought about expected relief to domestic consumers;

(b) whether in comparison to customs gate price of imported sugar, domestic sugar is still cheap in whole-sale market at around Rs. 18.50 per kg; and

(c) whether with the forthcoming festive season of Dussehra and Diwali, Government expect to do away with imports which has failed to bring down the prices for common consumers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) and (b): The Government has decided to allow imports of white sugar at zero per cent duty. However, the countervailing duty will be applicable on such imports and a Notification dated 23.06.2006 permitting import of white sugar without any quantitative restrictions upto 30.9.2006 has been issued in this regard. The landed cost of imported sugar is higher than the domestic prices. The provision made for imports is only an enabling provision to facilitate imports of sugar if the domestic prices increase relative to international price.

(c) Dussehra and Diwali festivals fall in the month of October, 2006 whereas the imports of white sugar has been allowed only up to end of September, 2006.

Import of wheat

461. SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA:
SHRI UDAY PRATAP SINGH:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to import additional quantity of wheat besides 3.5 MTs already planned;

(b) whether Government have further relaxed quality norms for imported wheat to enable more private agencies to bid for the global tender for 30 lakh tonnes, floated by STC;

(c) if so, whether import of wheat is to meet the buffer requirement as production and procurement have declined this year;

(d) how much wheat has been imported;

(e) whether it is sufficient to meet the requirement; and

(f) to what extent the prices of wheat have been checked?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) Additional import of wheat will be resorted to the extent required to maintain the prescribed buffer norms and to meet